

REMARKS

The application has been amended and is believed to be in condition for allowance.

The specification has been amended to add section headings responsive to the specification objection.

Responsive to the §112, second paragraph rejection of claims 4, 5, and 10-12, the claims have been amended.

Claim 10 was amended and finds support in published application paragraph [0017] "The beams 4 of the supports 2, 3 each have clamps 11, by means of which a sheet (not shown) can be clamped. The clamps 11 also have electrical contacts, so that a voltage can be applied to the taut sheet."

Claim 11 has been amended in view of paragraph [0017] and paragraph [0018] "During the electrolytic treatment of the sheet concerned the latter becomes warmer, as a result of which expansion follows. However, it is important that the sheet remains taut under tensile pretension between the legs 2, 3 and for this purpose the compensation means indicated in their entirety by 12 are provided. These compensation means 12 comprise a clamp 13 that is fitted on the bottom flange 10 of the support 1. By means of a suitable screw connector 14 the clamp 13 can be secured in the desired position on the support 1 or can be released so that it can be moved."

Claim 12 is believed definite as claim 11 now clearly requires the container to hold the liquid bath, and the

particular liquid bath does recite structural requirements of the container, i.e., a material sufficient to hold the recited liquid bath comprising chromic acid.

Withdrawal of the indefiniteness rejection is solicited.

Claims 10-12 were not substantively rejected. Further, the applied art does not teach the recited combination of features found in these claims. Their allowance is therefore solicited.

New claims have been added which find support in the specification as originally filed.

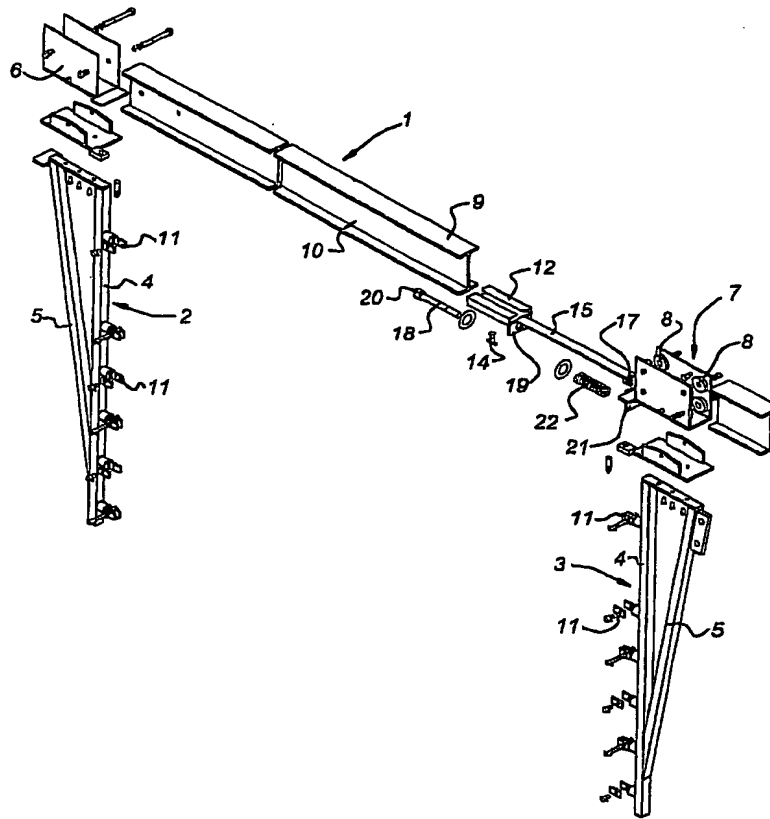
Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, and 9 were rejected as anticipated by NEWMAN 5,937,751.

Claims 3, 4, 7, and 8 were rejected as obvious over NEWMAN in view of BOLDE 2002/0088846.

The new claims and the previously examined claims, as amended, are all believed patentable.

Figure 3 is reproduced below.

Fig 3



NEWMAN does not teach or suggest a frame for holding a metal sheet material taut. Further, NEWMAN does not disclose a support with exactly two legs which extend essentially parallel to one another transversely from the support.

NEWMAN also does not disclose fixing means for fixing, each one of the opposing edges of a piece of metal sheet material thereto.

Note that NEWMAN teaches to hold fabric material for

printing, not metal sheets. Moreover, the NEWMAN teaching is to use border strips 7 which would not be appropriate form holding metal sheets. Still moreover, NEWMAN teaches four sides apparently necessary to stretch both the weft and warp threads present in textile material. Therefore, the structure of NEWMAN is not suitable for holding metal sheets. Nor would one of skill consider NEWMAN for tautly holding metal sheets.

As to the new claims, NEWMAN neither anticipates nor renders these claims obvious.

NEWMAN does not teach or suggest a frame for holding a metal sheet taut which comprises a beam support (1) and exactly two legs (2, 3) attached extending from the support and extending laterally parallel to each other, at least one of the two legs slidably attached to the support to allow movement along the support. Further, NEWMAN does not disclose clamps attached to each of the two legs to hold a metal sheet between the two legs. As pointed out by the Official Action, NEWMAN uses an alternative system for holding fabric, i.e., the border strips 7 as illustrated in Figures 3-4.

Thus, claim 13 is believed patentable.

NEWMAN also does not disclose such a frame with the support having flanges, where a first of the two legs stationary and fixed to the support, and a second of the two legs is slidably attached to the support by a trolley with wheels that are movable along the flanges of the support.

Nor does NEWMAN disclose clamps which each comprise electrical contacts configured to apply a voltage to the held metal sheet. Thus, claims 15-16 are believed patentable.

Neither applied reference teaches a tensile pretension element attached to the slidably attached leg to maintain the held metal sheet tautly under a tensile pretension between the two legs so that as the sheet expands the metal sheet remains taut under the tensile pretension between the legs as required by claims 17-18. It is not sufficient the prior art teach a spring, where the spring is not found as recited and does not meet the recitations of the claims.

Neither applied reference teaches that such a pretension element comprises a clamp fitted on a bottom flange of the support, a connector configured to releasably fix the clamp at a desired position on the support, a slider fixed to the clamp, a stop located at an end of the slider remote from the clamp, a guide fixed to the slidably attached leg, which guide protrudes through a corresponding hole in the clamp, a pretensioned helical spring extending to the stop, wherein, the tautly held metal sheet presses the helical spring and upon expansion of the metal sheet tensile force produced by the helical spring is maintained by movement of the slidably attached leg under the influence of the spring pretension.

Again, it is not sufficient the prior art teaches a clamp and spring, where the clamp and spring are not found as

recited and do not meet the recitations of the claims.

Thus, claims 19-20 are believed patentable.

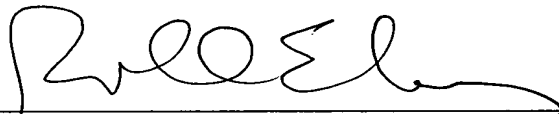
Reconsideration and allowance of all the claims are respectfully requested.

Applicant believes the present application is in condition for allowance and an early indication of the same is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

YOUNG & THOMPSON



Roland E. Long, Jr., Reg. No. 41,949
745 South 23rd Street
Arlington, VA 22202
Telephone (703) 521-2297
Telefax (703) 685-0573
(703) 979-4709

REL/lrs